UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

~~A/47/862~~
S/25089
11 January 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 143
THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 10 January 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I want to express my deep gratitude to General Phillipe Morillon, Commander of Bosnia and Herzegovina Command, for his prompt release of information related to the death of Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic, who was murdered by Serb and Montenegrin occupation forces while under the protection of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) on 8 January 1993.

Nevertheless, we are extremely troubled by the fact that UNPROFOR permitted the interception of the armoured personnel carrier carrying Deputy Prime Minister Turajlic. The Deputy Prime Minister was murdered in full view of UNPROFOR forces, which had clearly acquiesced to the aggressor's demand that the vehicle be opened and that its occupants be identified. The United Nations Protection Force acted more as a submissive hostage than as a protection force, clearly failing to use any forceful and/or preventive measures to resist this unlawful interception.

The astonishing circumstances leading to Mr. Turajlic's murder while under UNPROFOR protection demonstrate plainly that, too often, the United Nations Protection Force offers neither protection nor force. UNPROFOR unfortunately labours under a constricted mandate, passive rules of engagement and inadequate political support. These factors have proven to be grossly counterproductive, permitting occupation forces to use UNPROFOR as an unwitting vehicle of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

UNPROFOR's unwillingness or inability to carry out its mandate to use all necessary force for the purpose of delivering humanitarian aid, given in Security Council resolution 770 (1992), is perhaps the best example of the inadequate level of political support provided to UNPROFOR.

Whereas General Morillon reports that all sides were contacted during the two-hour negotiations for passage of the vehicle, there can be no doubt that the murder of Mr. Turajlic was supported at the highest levels of Serb extremist leadership in Belgrade and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Considering the time permitted for negotiations, we cannot accept the theory that a single soldier is responsible for the murder.

The aggressors have taken every opportunity to exploit UNPROFOR's constricted mandate and, as we often see, negotiations simply facilitate their violent objectives.

Mr. Turajlic's interception and murder on a road controlled by UNPROFOR demonstrates the manifest necessity of correcting UNPROFOR's mandate and rules of engagement and of obtaining proper political support for its work if it is to function as a genuine protection force in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We therefore urge you to demand this from the Security Council in order to prevent further occurrences of UNPROFOR, which is under Your Excellency's command, being used as an unwitting vehicle of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating this letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 143, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative